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BOOK REVIEWS

Don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, Obispo de Puebla y Osma, Visitador y Virrey de la Nueva España. By GENARO GARCÍA. (Mexico: Librería de Bouret, 1918. Pp. 426.)

In this book the distinguished bibliographer and historian of Mexico sets forth in his perfectly polished Spanish and with his characteristically finished scholarship the significant aspects of the life of one of the most noteworthy figures in Mexican colonial history. Genaro García is the one Mexican historian of the day who has an established international reputation. Juan de Palafox y Mendoza was the one great administrator of seventeenth-century New Spain who had the courage to set himself against the current of things as they ought not to be in order that his king might be the better served. In a degree his career was remarkably like that of the great eighteenth-century breaker of traditions, José de Gálvez; both rose from obscurity to great power; both, as visitors general, set New Spain by the ears, breaking through the trammels of administrative forms to obtain their ends; both had a measure of success in arresting the decay of an empire which was foredoomed to dissolution in spite of the work of reformers.

The biography is given a masterly treatment. Something there is, too, of self-revelation in the work of the author. García is still a young man; remarkably young in face, lithe in figure, buoyant in spirit though amply endowed with years, experience, and success. So he has sat serene—almost serene—in his wonderful private library in the Calle Carmen, adding another volume to a list of publications already longer than any other living historian of the continent has to his credit. Almost serene there, while revolution and ruin stalked through his own land, and in Europe “a stupendously powerful nation . . . with insane ambition to dominate the world, began the most costly and cruel war of all the centuries, unmindful that neglect of the principles of right, of the prerogatives of the weak, of the liberties of humanity, of the obligations of honor itself, can never establish perdurable greatness.” He saw his way through to a balanced conception of the world war while yet the vision of many of his compatriots was

sadly befogged. Thus he was able to construct a life-story that is worth reading for its clear understanding of the political, social, and religious life of the seventeenth century.

Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, born in 1600, was the love-child of the marquis of Ariza. The mother, for shame, would have had him drowned, but the miller, as in a fairy story, rescued him and kept him until he was ten years old, when the father in expiation legitimized him and lavished upon him care, affection, education, and, finally, the management of the family estate. This responsibility won the youth the opportunity to sit in the Cortes of Monsón; here, by humiliating but necessary adulation of silly Philip IV, he attracted the attention and favor of the malevolent favorite, the count of Olivares, who in 1626 made Palafox fiscal of the Consejo de Guerra while yet he wore the monastic garb of the university student. This he had been about to discard for the luxurious attire appropriate to his new position and his "almost completed" nuptials, when a word from Olivares compelled him to lay aside both fine raiment and conjugal felicity. Consequently the career of the Church, which his parents desired for him, was still open, and into it his natural devotional bent impelled him.

In 1629 he completed his holy orders, and was soon made fiscal of the Council of the Indies. In the new office he gained an intimate knowledge of the affairs of the American colonies, which gave him ascendancy over his colleagues at court; even secretaries of state were wont to court his opinion and favor.

When the bishop of Puebla died in 1638, the king named Palafox for the vacant see, and he was consecrated in December of the following year. He was to go to the Indies with the newly appointed viceroy, Escalona, and there perform numerous political duties in addition to his episcopal ones. He was to act as *juez de residencia* of two retired viceroys and as visitor general of New Spain; he was also to revive the ocean trade in the Pacific which had recently been suspended by the viceroy Cerralvo. Such a combination of duties in one man sufficiently emphasizes the scant resources of the monarch for ultramarine appointments, but the lack of good administrative timber was later to be still more strikingly demonstrated when, the young and giddy viceroy falling under a cloud of suspicion, Palafox was asked to serve at one and the same time as visitor general, viceroy, archbishop of Mexico, and bishop of Puebla. Indeed, so cumbersome was the administrative system, so full of executive and judicial checks and balances, that frictionless administration could be effected only by reposing all the power in one supreme officer.

Arriving in New Spain, Palafox participated in the welcome extended to the new viceroy in a series of festivities which lasted for months and cost forty thousand pesos from the municipal funds of Mexico City. Then, plunging into his episcopal duties with remarkable energy, he soon had the long neglected construction of his cathedral under way again, religious ceremony and doctrine revived and purified, and the remnants of paganism destroyed with a thoroughness worthy of the apostolic zeal of the sixteenth century missionaries.

The orgy of reform was halted in mid-career by a situation due to the historic growth of the Church in New Spain. The early spiritual conquest had been made almost entirely by friars or religious. They had absorbed the care of the curacies and *doctrinas* to the practical exclusion of the secular priests, who arrived late on the scene of action. Provision had been made for friars to act as parish priests under licenses from the bishops. But they had consistently refrained from seeking licenses because they wanted to manage and enjoy their fortunes and lands without control from the secular arm of the Church. Throughout nearly all of New Spain they had enjoyed half a century of immunity from this control, but Palafox brought the regulars to a reckoning in the bishopric of Puebla in three days' time. The establishment of the episcopal authority came as salvation to his seven hundred secular clergymen, who, lacking the revenues from taxes and obventions which went to the regulars as the principal landholders and *curas de almas*, had been reduced to beggary.

In the midst of these labors came the revolution whereby Portugal regained her independence, which had been snatched away by Philip II. The viceroy, Escalona, being a near relative of the House of Braganza, was suspected of being too sympathetic with the movement. Palafox, investigating the matter, brought findings of no great importance, but the suspicion was sufficient to cause the king to remove Escalona and put Palafox temporarily in his place. For a few months after June 9, 1642, then, the prelate exercised practically omnipotent control in Mexico.

Here was the opportunity to extend the work of secularization begun in Puebla and to continue the destruction of the Aztec idols which the viceroys had preserved as trophies. In these and other ecclesiastical reforms his activities were so manifold that it was said that the good customs which he introduced left little need for further "government."

Meantime as visitor Palafox had continued the *residencias* of the two viceroys amid the visitation of the *consulado*, the mint, the treas-

ury officials, and the *audiencia*. Numberless suits were brought against lax administrative officers. Necessarily, an enemy was made as well as a friend with every decision.

As viceroy he removed the dangerous Portuguese settlers twenty leagues from the coast as a defense measure; he compiled, classified, and made harmonious the multifarious ordinances for the control of the *audiencia*, the treasury officials, the *tribunal de cuentas*, the university, for the collection of the tribute and the *alcabala*, and for the control of the chief industries. He sent the king a special report on the several provinces of New Spain. He quickened the course of justice in the courts. He added 700,000 pesos to the tax returns without raising the rates. He organized twelve regiments of soldiers to repel possible invasion, and built and equipped an armory in the capital. He checked official graft, going so far in his purifying practices as to deny himself any salary in his capacities as viceroy and visitor.

But his too radical reforms called down trouble upon his head. The opposition took the form of long lawsuits with the Jesuits over the already vexed question of the payment of the tithes. It will be remembered that the Pope in 1501 conceded the tithes of America to the Spanish crown under the condition that the revenue be used to endow churches and cathedrals and to support priests. Their Catholic Majesties conceded the tithes to the Church, reserving to the state two-ninths of the gross receipts. Hence any alienation of estates to the regular orders without reserving the tithes for the secular church was illegal, as it contravened the definitive apostolic concession.

In America, where the tithes were of special importance because they were the sole resource of the seculars, the cathedrals brought suits frequently against the orders, which had monopolized great tracts of land and refused tithe payments on the produce thereof. This refusal not only reduced the income of the secular Church and the state by the amount of tithes due from the orders, but caused other landholders to delay or refuse to pay their tithes also, because they could not farm successfully in competition with those who did not pay the legal taxes.

The Jesuit order, in particular, had engaged extensively in agriculture, trade, and manufacturing. By its refusal to pay tithes it had made the situation of the secular Church and of the state particularly difficult. The refusal was based on exemptions which had subsisted until 1623, but which had then been revoked. Suits begun in connection

with this legislation had not yet been decided when Palafox came to New Spain. In particular, there had been a donation to the Jesuits of Puebla by the *racionero* of the cathedral itself, de la Serna, of certain lands without reservation of the tithes, and the suit brought by the cathedral to annul the gift was still pending. The ecclesiastical court excommunicated de la Serna at the instance of Palafox, this proving the beginning of his rupture with the powerful order. The Jesuits complained of him to the king in 1642, but the bishop justified his procedure by showing that his own cathedral was two years behind in its revenues, others being in even worse straits, while the orders were needlessly increasing their wealth, though they were already in possession of the greater and better part of the lands.

To this the Company replied in 1643 and 1644. The judicial documents multiplied during the ensuing years. The Jesuits began to inveigh against Palafox from their pulpits; he even believed that they meditated doing away with him, but he continued to fight for his episcopal dignity and prerogatives.

In the midst of the quarrel over the tithes arose a new contention, for the Jesuits, alone of the regulars now, persisted in confessing and preaching without licenses. Merlo, judge of the ecclesiastical court, excommunicated them, but they only brought additional suits, naming their own especial *jueces conservadores* to hear them. These *jueces* were Dominicans, whereas they legally should have been seculars. To prevent Palafox from carrying the litigation to the *audiencia*, as he would have been likely to do, the Company brought process of recusation before the viceroy against the *oidores*. The viceroy, violating the rules of jurisprudence, took cognizance of his own recusation (as a member of the *audiencia*), annulled it, and induced the archbishop of Mexico to imprison the *promotor eclesiástico* of Puebla.

Being thus backed, the *jueces conservadores*, ignoring previous litigation, rendered a sentence declaring that the Jesuits should be restored to their prior status, ordered Palafox and Merlo to annul their excommunication, remove their censures, and withdraw their papers in the suits concerning the tithes, under pain of fine and excommunication.

The Inquisition now took a hand, removing notices of excommunication which Palafox and Merlo had posted, but failing to molest those published by the *jueces conservadores*. Outside the courts the people were for the most part loyal to Palafox, but the viceroy and his wife opposed him and secured his removal from the office of visitor general.

Finally the bishop began to fear for his life; knowing that his enemies were about to banish him, and desiring to avoid further public disorders, he went into hiding at Chiapa, eight leagues away. Scarcely had he gone, when the *jueces conservadores* came to Puebla and obliged the cathedral chapter to assume the episcopacy in *sede vacante*. The bishop's friends were put into jail, his suit to compel the taking out of licenses was declared an *injuria*, and he himself was charged with sedition.

The tangled knot was finally cut by the king, who sent the viceroy to Peru, naming a friend of Palafox in his place, and "upheld" Merlo in his course by promoting him to be bishop of Honduras. Palafox, returning to his diocese amid general rejoicings, was chagrined to find that he had been ordered to Spain at the behest of his relatives. Before he left Puebla he resumed charge of his see, and became reconciled with Salvatierra, the viceroy, and with the Jesuits. His suits against them he agreed to leave alone until the decision of the Pope could be obtained. In 1648 the king upheld the demand of Palafox for the licenses, and sharply reprimanded the viceroy for his support of the *jueces conservadores*, who were ousted at the same time. Thus Palafox won his contention; but his triumph was short, for the Jesuits "rebelled against the episcopal jurisdiction, disobeyed the mandates of their Father General, opposed the decisions of the Holy See, and contravened the orders of his Majesty".

Returning to Spain after consecrating his newly finished cathedral, the belligerent bishop found himself transferred from the Council of the Indies to that of Aragon, a virtual dismissal. His episcopal honors were also decreased by his assignment to the meagre bishopric of Osma, this being equivalent to permanent retirement. Such gratitude did Philip show. Palafox died at Osma in poverty and the odor of sanctity in 1657. The suits concerning the tithes dragged on for a century before secularization was achieved. It is perhaps his strict loyalty to his subject that makes the author appear to give the Jesuits scant credit for their work in New Spain. The modern reader will necessarily feel less interest in the merits of the quarrel than in the permanent good effected by each party. Palafox and the Jesuits both still live.

It would be a work of supererogation to call attention to the painstaking scholarliness of Señor García's book. His reputation as a workman not to be satisfied with anything short of perfection in method and treatment is well established. His skill in depicting the

scenes and events of the seventeenth century is masterly. Students must come to this book for such social materials as an account in full of a triumphal entry of a viceroy, a description of the old palace of Mexico or the cathedral of Puebla, in order to obtain that vivid impression of those times which will make understandable why the power of Spain, so wide-spread, was yet so water-logged within. Best of all, we may know those people of Mexico and Puebla as they worked and quarreled and governed and disobeyed, just for the sake of knowing them, and for none of the ulterior designs of scholarship.

After having seen the author's library, the reviewer can feel no surprise at the remarkable collection of Palafoxiana listed in the careful bibliography. One may, however, lament the absence in this book, as in nearly all historical writings in the Spanish language, of a working index, and even pray that ere long the custom may be established of including the needed key to the treasures which these books contain whereby they may be made more available to the busy student.

HERBERT INGRAM PRIESTLEY.

Intervention in Mexico. By SAMUEL GUY INMAN Foreword by Professor William R. Shepherd. (New York: Association Press, 1919. 248 pages.)

Under this occasional but apt title Mr. Inman discusses the phases of the vexed Mexican question concerning which he is most competent to speak. Much of the evidence and information which has emanated from the neighbor land during recent years has had to be discredited because of its patent or ill-concealed purpose to serve some ulterior end. But here is a book in which one feels from the first word to the end the absolute sincerity of the writer. He has been long a missionary to Mexico. Since ex-president Taft testified to the dignity and worth of the work of missionaries, we have taken and accepted them among brothers and fellows as being competent to tell what they know. Mr. Inman tells his story in plain straight-forward English that leaves the reader with the pleasant assurance that he has no axe to grind, no spleen to vent, no propaganda to serve except that of the altruistic work in which he is engaged.

The book is launched by a foreword from Professor Shepherd which sets forth a few simple reasons for tolerance, absence of haste, cool judgment, and sincerity, in looking at ourselves and at Mexico. It is a fitting introduction to a well-written little book; one wishes that